

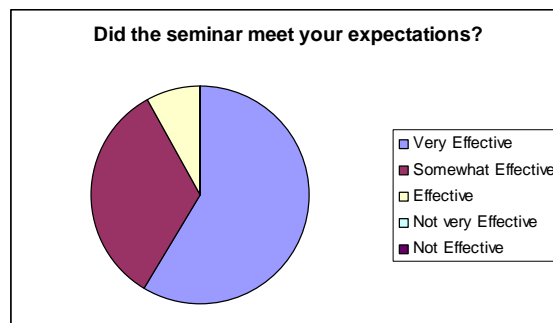


Working Women in Transition

PUTTING THE SKILLS AND TALENTS
OF MATURE WOMEN TO WORK

On November 14, 2008, sixty (60) people from the Bloomington-Bedford area attended a half-day seminar at Ivy Tech Community College that gave older women the forum to discover resources and options that can transform their lives as they prepare for their next career and offered employers an opportunity to explore trends and strategies that tap into the enormous potential of experienced working women. This program was initiated by the Indiana Commission for Women (ICW). Ivy Tech Community College co-sponsored the event and nine additional organizations provided support, guidance and information as ICW planned the event. The seminar was funded by the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The goal of the seminar was to provide mature women with information, resources, and networking as they face transitions in their careers while giving employers the tools to engage more mature employees in their workforce. Of the twenty-four (24) returned evaluation forms received, 100% of those completed felt that the program was effective in meeting their expectations (See Graph).



Dr. Ellen Miller, Executive Director of the Center for Aging & Community at the University of Indianapolis, provided a framework for participants to consider the changing demographics in Indiana. She discussed two fundamental trends in global aging: rising longevity and falling fertility and gave examples of strategies that employers can take to engage mature workers.

Following Dr Miller's presentation, two breakout sessions were conducted. The first session was facilitated by Nancy Ahlrichs, author of *Ignited Gen B & Gen V: the New Rules of Engagement for Boomers, Veterans and Other Long-termers on the Job*. In her session, Nancy discussed the myths that sometimes confront employers as they deal with mature and long-term employees. The second session was facilitated by Linda Rendleman, author of *Women Like Us: Real Stories and Strategies for Living Your Best Life*. Linda guided participants through exercises that assisted them in assessing their job options and skills, understanding what they really want and developing strategies and skills to help them get there. Most participants found Linda's session the most helpful and felt that there was not enough time for the presentation.

The final session gave participants the opportunity to hear from four women who had made successful transitions later in life. Karen Charles, Deana Collins, Deborah Daggy and Karen Scherer each shared their stories on how they improved their lives. Comments from participants indicated that they found encouragement from these stories and look forward to making the necessary changes in their lives.

Overall, the program was a success and one outcome of the event is to identify ways to replicate this program around the state. Several individuals from other cities including Evansville, Indianapolis, Lafayette and Northwest Indiana have indicated that they would like to host a similar session in their communities. Discussions with key stakeholders will begin on the next steps to be taken.